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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

l	1.	A method for screening a patient for cancer or precancer, the method comprising
2	the s	teps of:

detecting in a patient tissue or body fluid sample comprising exfoliated cells and cellular debris, nucleic acid fragments that are greater than 200 base pairs in length; the presence of said fragments being a positive screen for cancer or precancer.

- 2. *t*The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting step comprises conducting an amplification reaction designed to amplify only nucleic acids in said sample that are greater than 200 base pairs in length.
- The method of claim 1, wherein said sample is selected from the group consisting of stool, pus, and urine.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of enriching said sample for human DNA.
 - 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of isolating human DNA from said sample.
 - 6. A method for screening a patient for cancer or precancer, the method comprising the steps of:
 - determining in a patient tissue or body fluid sample a first amount of nucleic acid fragments greater than 200 base pairs in length;
 - determining in said sample a second amount of nucleic acid fragments less than about 200 base pairs in length;
- determining a ratio between said first amount and said second amount; and identifying a positive screen if said ratios exceeds a threshold ratio for patients who do not have cancer or precancer.
- A method for screening a patient for cancer or precancer, the method comprising the step of

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- detecting in a patient tissue or body fluid sample comprising exfoliated cells a
- 4 nucleic acid fragment of a length that is not expected to be present in said sample in a
- 5 healthy patient;
- the presence of said fragment being a positive screen.